



Chapter 3

Pond Management

Supplemental Feeding

Supplemental feeding can be used to increase the growth of fish and harvesting rates of ponds. Feeding is not necessary for most ponds, as an adequate quantity of natural food organisms (insects, worms, and crustaceans) are present to support fish populations. In small, infertile ponds, supplemental feeding may be preferable to fertilization for increasing productivity. Feeding is not recommended for fertilized ponds.

Bluegills and channel catfish will readily take feed, whereas bass usually do not. However, some commercial hatcheries sell "trained" bass that have been conditioned to consume artificial feed.

Feed only between spring and fall when the water temperature exceeds 65°F. Stop feeding if the water temperature is greater than 90°F, as fish will generally not feed at higher temperatures. It is best to place the feed in the pond daily at several locations. Feed only the amount that the fish consume in about 10 to 15 minutes and no more than 10 pounds per acre per day. Excessive feeding can cause fish kills because the decomposition of uneaten feed depletes the oxygen supply. Discontinue feeding if the fish stop accepting the feed. Automatic and demand feeders are commercially available.

Be sure to continue a feeding program once you have started it. If feeding is discontinued while the fish are still accepting feed, there may be more fish than the natural food supply can support, resulting in stunted fish of poor quality. Occasional feeding will do little to increase fish growth.

Several commercial feed preparations are available in either floating or sinking varieties. Although more expensive, floating feed makes it possible to observe the extent and duration of feeding. Floating feed can be placed in floating plastic rings that prevent the pellets from washing ashore. Moldy feed should not be used, as it can be toxic to fish.

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For information on Texas Hunter Directional Fish Feeders, visit:

<http://www.texashunterproducts.com/difife1.html>

or call (800) 969-3337